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# How to Give Your Husband a Kingdom in Five Easy Steps

Delores J. Gustafson\*

“Why do we have to learn English history? My ancestors were Swedish!” This was the question my husband, Robert Gustafson, posed to his teachers in Nashwauk on the Iron Range of Minnesota in the 1940s. His grandparents and those of all of his classmates were emigrants from Sweden, Finland, Italy, Serbia or Croatia. None of them came from England. His question was pertinent and he had a good argument for his part of the world. However, the Minnesota State school curriculum was set. American History included English history but not Swedish.

He also wondered about his Swedish heritage, but his father was just not interested. When he asked his grandfather about Sweden, he would only reply - “It’s not important. We’re American now and earning a living is the most important thing.” That closed the door effectively on finding out about his Swedish background from relatives.

Today - through my research, I have given my husband a *Swedish* kingdom.

I want this story of my search to be a “push start” for anyone who believes one must have a great deal of information before beginning the search into an immigrant family. I offer you five steps toward finding your “kingdom.”

**Step One:** Learn the ropes and practice, practice, practice.

Our first encounter with Scandinavia came in 1972. Our chartered tour took us to Copenhagen, Stockholm and Helsinki. With the help of my mother, who is Danish, we found a young relative in Copenhagen. He totally charmed us with his flaming red hair and beard and his enthusiasm in meeting American relatives. I began then to think about finding my Danish roots. In Stockholm we were appalled by the five pages of Gustafson names in the telephone directory. We despaired of ever finding Swedish relatives. In Helsinki we had two days to visit Finnish relatives and found their family history quite well documented with its roots in Sweden as well.

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When we moved to Vermont from Minnesota in 1974, I could not escape my search. Genealogical research is a part of the air in Vermont. I enrolled in a genealogy course and began searching my Danish and German roots. I now had the tools to do it correctly.

I concentrated on my German ancestors because of the challenge of my course. Family records were sparse, but I was able to find the entire family of seven children and their parents who had emigrated from Pomerania in Germany between 1870 and 1875. An elderly relative in Minnesota had been tracing the descendants, so we joined forces. The result was a small family history book, which gave me courage to continue my research.

We moved twice in the next four years but I could always seek out local history places and become involved in their research. In 1979 we lived in Colorado Springs. The White House Ranch, a small historic site, needed more information on the first residents of a home being restored. I became their researcher. I used my regular research tools plus the local newspaper files, the Family History Center of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the archives of the Colorado, Ohio and Minnesota Historical Societies and the Pioneer Museum of Colorado Springs. I even travelled to Ohio to interview relatives. I received information from England and South Africa and was careful to file and index my information correctly. I now had everything that was needed to write a great book about that particular family. Now I had definitely acquired practice in researching family history.

**Step Two:** Live in an area where your ethnic background and sources are very strong.

When we returned to Minnesota to live, once again the Swedish question reared its head. We joined the American Swedish Institute (ASI) as well as the Minnesota Genealogical Society. I took classes dealing with research in Scandinavian records. Then I brought Bob's meager Swedish family information to the archivist at ASI. We had three bits of data:

1. Birth date of grandpa Albin Werner Gustafson - 25 Nov. 1865.
2. Approximate date of emigration - 1890-1892.
3. Photograph of a woman purported to be the mother of Albin with the studio name on the border - Harold Eriksson, Skövde 1921.

First we looked up Skövde and found it to be a city in southern Sweden between the lakes of Vättern and Vänern. Bob had always said that if anyone pushed his grandfather about where he came from in Sweden, he would invariably answer - "Stockholm." Skövde is not near Stockholm. Bob's grandfather was an

iron miner so we assumed that he came from an area in Sweden where there were mines. Skövde is a center of a large farming area and one of the earliest settled parts of the country away from the coasts. The early mines are north and south of Skövde. Next we began a search of the microfilm records of emigration from Sweden between 1889 and 1893. Gustafson is a common name but the baptismal names Albin Werner were a bit unusual so that would help us. We found many Gustafsons but in November 1890 we found the only Albin Werner Gustafsson. He had come from Locketorp Parish (Skar.) and had headed for Republic, MI through Hull, England at the age of 24. We searched the map of the area around Skövde and found Locketorp just 15 kilometers to the north. We had found the beginnings of our search. ASI was promoting a special project at this time to encourage people to use the emigration files. For the sum of \$25.00 the information could be sent to Sweden and archivists would search for the emigrant, his parents and his birth place. We sent in all of our facts and waited. In the meanwhile I went ahead with a search of my own.

**Step Three:** Live near a Family History Center of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

In Golden Valley, a few miles from our home, is the treasure known as the Family History Center operated by the Mormon Church. It is open to anyone wishing to find his or her ancestors. I reviewed its files and for a nominal fee ordered the parish records of Locketorp Parish for the years 1885-1890. Then I waited for the film to be forwarded from Salt Lake City.

The Swedish parish records are truly marvelous. Not only do they contain the names of the parishioners, but also their birth places, the parish they came from, if they moved into the parish (*inflyttning*) and the date and the parish they moved to, if they left for another parish (*utflyttning*) and the date. As a researcher I could personally hug all those record keepers for the wealth of information they have left us.

Within two weeks I was called by the volunteer at the Family History Center. My films were in and they would be held for a month. I reserved a morning for searching. These parish records are not in alphabetical order. They are usually arranged by the farms or villages that are to be found in each parish. Often one page may cover a five year period and document the people who moved to or from the farm. Since I was not looking for a whole family, but only one name, I had to be very careful. In a list of twenty workers on a farm, it would be easy to miss a name. Gustafson was not as common as I had expected it to be in Locketorp Parish and I soon grew accustomed to the old handwriting of the different pastors. After about two hours of peering into the viewing machine, I found this piece of information on page 215 - on a farm named Korsgården, owned by Anders Gustaf Andersson, I found a list of laborers and line 16 read: "*Dräng* (servant) Albin Verner Gustafsson, born in Skövde 25 Nov. 1865.

I had now struck pay dirt. The page also indicated that Bob's grandfather had come to Korsgården in 1886 from Stommen, another farm, recorded on page 166. I turned to that page and found that he had come to Stommen in 1885 from Hagelberg Parish (Skar.) and had gone to Korsgården in 1886. He left 22 Oct. 1887 to go to Våmb (earlier Vårfruhem) Parish (Skar.). Before photographing the page I was surprised to find his name once again near the bottom of the page. Had he returned? Here was a great find. Across the line following his name and birthdate was a great deal of writing which filled the line. It read in Swedish - "Erhållit K. Majts. tillstånd af d. 24 Oct.'90 att afflytta från riket." (In translation - "Has received permission from His Majesty's Government 24 Oct. 1890 to emigrate). On the final line was the following statement - "Exerc. 1 g. året vid Sappör bataljonen i Carlsborg år 1887. No. 112 11/1886." (In translation - "He served for one year in the Sapper Battalion at Karlsborg and was No. 112). In the column headed "Utflyttning" was the marvelous information that he had left for America 31 Oct. 1890. I had certainly found Bob's grandfather. The data presented in the parish household examination roll had corroborated the information that I had from the emigration lists which stated that he had left Göteborg in November 1890.

I made copies of all the pages, making sure that I had written down the film numbers and the names on all of the pages so that I could verify the information. Now I could begin ordering the films and thus work backwards from 1885. This is usually a slow process but I hoped to get back to the year Albin lived with his parents. I ordered my next film, Hagelberg Parish (Skar.) for 1880-1885.

Over the next few months my work progressed as I ordered and received the films. Albin had come to Hagelberg from Sjögerstad Parish (Skar.) in 1884. The Sjögerstad household examination roll showed that he had come from page 31 in 1883 and on that particular page I found that he had come from Skövde in 1882. This gave me a new place to search but here I was stopped. Skövde is a large city and has a huge parish. After spending two days getting through the records of 1880-1885 I could find nothing. I had nowhere else to turn.

At this point in time a letter arrived from the Swedish archivist in Ramsele in Sweden. It was an answer to the ASI inquiry of five months earlier. Here much of my search was summed up in a one page letter. It stated that Albin Verner had been born in Björby in Skövde Parish, the illegitimate son of Anna Charlotta Schuer. Eleven months later she had married Erik Gustaf Larsson in Skövde. The archivist interjected that he did not know if Erik Gustaf Larsson was indeed the father. The letter continued with the parents and birth places of both Anna and Erik and even the name of the farm, where Anna was born. I now had many jumping off points for an entire family search.



The rest of the year was occupied with ordering films and hunting for the Schuer and Larsson families, one a very unusual name, the other very common. Fortunately some member of the Mormon Church had purchased all of the Kyrkefalla Parish (Skar.) records for the Family History Center, the parish of all the Larssons. I could trace the entire family back to the 1700s in a very short time without that "order and wait" syndrome. The Schuers were a very prominent and large family in the Skaraborg records and because I had the name of the original farm, my search time was cut in half. Soon my research showed the following interesting information.

The Schuer family originally came from Göteborg and many had been soldiers. The farm, Marbogården, had been awarded to one Schuer and the others ran it. The father of Anna took over another farm but things must not have gone very well. Anna, the oldest child of eight, hired out to work on a neighboring farm at the age of 19. Her mother and the two youngest sisters had just died, all within a few days. Could there have been an epidemic? Anna returned home a year later, probably to help with the remaining five children. In February of 1863 she had an illegitimate son named Carl Johan. In November of 1865 she moved to the Björby farm of Erik Gustaf Larsson near Skövde and soon after her arrival her second son, Albin Verner was born.

Erik Gustaf Larsson had moved to Björby two years earlier in 1863. He had grown up on the Tubberud farm in Kyrkefalla Parish. His mother, Sara Cajsa Eliasdotter, had inherited a part of her father's farm. When she married Lars Svensson, they had remained at Tubberud, working it. When Erik Gustaf was but 14 years old, his father died, leaving Sara Cajsa with three boys and a farm. The three sons worked the small farm, but Erik Gustaf was the only survivor when his two brothers died quite young. When Erik's mother died in December 1861, Erik Gustaf either lost or sold the farm. In 1863 someone else had the farm and he had moved to Björby in Skövde Parish.

Anna Charlotta Schuer and Erik Gustaf Larsson lived together and finally married in October 1866. The records after that date do not label their son Albin Verner as illegitimate. In 1868 the couple together with two small sons moved to Fröjered Parish (Skar.).

Here I lost the family. I read and re-read the Fröjered records with no success. How could they disappear? Finally I returned to the Skövde records which had failed me earlier. I ordered films of the earlier years this time, for 1870-1880, hoping I might locate them. At least I now had a whole family to look for, instead of just one name. Happily, I found them in 1874. Many things had occurred between 1868 and 1874. They must have lost whatever small holdings they had because the family appears at the Öm poor house (*fattigstuga*). Two more sons were added during those lost years - Thure, born in 1868 and August, born in 1874.

Sadly Thure died in 1874, shortly after the birth of August. Both Carl Johan and Albin Verner had their names crossed out when they evidently left to hire out for work in 1881 and 1882, leaving their parents and brother behind in the poor house.

I decided to attempt to find out what happened to them. I checked the Skövde records for 1885-1895 and found that these films were not as yet available in the United States. My search for Albin Verner had been very successful and we now knew much about his Swedish life. Still there were those questions that continued to nag me. What happened to Albin Verner's two brothers? Did they live to raise families? Did his parents die in poverty? I needed more help.

**Step Four:** Find a Swedish researcher who is thrilled and excited about emigrant research.

Once again I wrote to Sweden. The *pastorsexpedition* (church office) in Skövde referred me to *Skara stifts- och landsbibliotek*, a local history library. Here I found the most amazing gentleman - Dr. Arne Sträng. Within two months he found not only the death dates but also the burial places of Albin Verner's parents. He found where the two brothers had gone and the names of some of their children. He also became fascinated with the Schuer family since it had merged with the Lagerberg family. He told us that the Lagerbergs were members of the nobility and he copied pertinent pages from the classic Swedish work on the nobility, published by Gustaf Elgenstierna. He included this in a large packet with a letter saying - "Gustava Lagerberg, a noblewoman, had crossed the class lines by marrying outside the nobility, i.e. a commoner, Pasch F. Schuer, even though he was a person of rank, being an officer. The manor house in which her parents were married in 1777 is now a part of our museum in Skara."

Since the Schuer name is so unusual in Sweden, he looked in the Stockholm telephone catalogue and sent us the names and addresses of the only two Schuers there. I wrote to one of them, Per Christer Schuer, and within two weeks I had a large envelope with the history of the Schuer family written by his father and grandfather. He was very pleased to have found the lost relatives and extended an invitation to visit whenever we came to his country.

Through Dr. Sträng we also got the name of a Lagerberg/Schuer relative who lived near Skövde - Anna Lundquister, who would be happy to meet us. Then he added - "I too, would enjoy visiting with you." Of course all of these invitations had to lead to my last step, number five.

**Step Five:** Travel to the land of your heritage and meet your relatives.

Since our fortieth wedding anniversary would occur in August of 1992, we planned to incorporate my Danish and Swedish genealogical research into our travel plans for that time. We flew to Copenhagen and Aalborg to visit the Danish cemeteries and towns which were important to my family history. Relatives received us gladly and we had much to discuss.

We then drove to Skövde in Sweden and began visiting those places where Albin Verner had lived. We took pictures of farms, churches, cemeteries and the countryside. We met Bob's second cousin, Anders Gustafsson in Degerfors, and compared notes about their grandfathers. Bob's family was unknown in their memories. In the printed history, Albin Verner was listed as the second son of Anna Charlotta but the only information about him was from 1928, the year that Anna died. Behind his name in the printed history was the word unknown (*okänd*) with the address of Bovalik, Minnesota, USA, which we quickly corrected to Biwabik. Perhaps the name of this Iron Range town had been found and miscopied from Anna Charlotta's papers when the Schuers did their research in 1969. Bob's father had said that he remembered Albin having written letters to his mother in Sweden. We were glad to be able to give the Gustafssons in Sweden the correct family history of the Gustafssons in America.

We also met Anna Lindquister, a third cousin of Bob's father. She greeted us at the door of her lovely yellow farm house wearing the traditional folk costume. Her daughter and granddaughter were there to help with the translating. Anna could understand some English, but had trouble speaking it. We shall never forget their warm welcome as they prepared a Swedish meal for us consisting of salmon, potatoes, salad, freshly baked bread and apple pie with vanilla sauce and lots of coffee.

The high point of our Swedish visit came when Anna's neighbor, Walter, a genealogist, arrived to meet us. He could speak no English, but was very anxious to show us the papers he had prepared for our visit. He had studied Anna's family and had delved thoroughly into the Lagerberg connection in the Swedish nobility books. This was Bob's heritage also. Walter bowed and presented Bob with a set of papers saying - "You are a descendant of Erik Johansson Vasa, the father of the first king of Sweden."

With Anna's daughter acting as the translator he told us this story.

By the early 1500s Denmark had ruled Sweden for over 100 years. There had been uprisings against Denmark those years. In 1471 Sten Sture had defeated Christian I, but Denmark still held the upper hand. In 1520 Christian II, after



defeating Sten Sture the younger, had called upon the Swedish noblemen to gather on the Great Square in Stockholm (*Stortorget*) to settle the peace. The Danish king settled it by killing all 82 Swedish noblemen. Today that event is called the “Blood Bath of Stockholm”. It marked the beginning of a revolution which followed.

Four of Bob’s relatives were killed in that massacre. One who died, Erik Johansson Vasa, had a daughter named Margareta. She was married to Joakim Brahe and their son, Per, had just been born. The deaths of her father and husband in Stockholm were a great blow to her and her brother Gustav Vasa, who swore retaliation. He organized the populace of Dalarna and during the winter, when least expected, attacked the Danes and drove them from Sweden. The following year Gustav Eriksson Vasa was elected King of Sweden.

Today’s Swedish King, Carl XVI Gustaf, can trace his family back to Gustav Vasa. Bob can trace his family back to Margareta, Gustav Vasa’s sister. If one counts back through the generations, one will find that Bob is the 13th cousin of the King of Sweden.

That is how I found a kingdom for my husband as a fortieth wedding anniversary gift.

## Lineage

**Erik Johansson Vasa**, died 8 Nov. 1520

Son:

**Gustav I Vasa** (1496-1560)

1. **Carl IX** (1550-1611)
2. **Catharina** of Pfalz-Zweibrücken (1584-1638)
3. **Christina Magdalena** of Pfalz-Zweibrücken (1616-1662)
4. **Fredrik VII Magnus** of Baden-Durlach (1647-1709)
5. **Carl III Wilhelm** of Baden-Durlach (1679-1738)
6. **Fredrik Ernst** of Baden-Durlach (1703-1732)
7. **Carl Fredrik** of Baden (1728-1811)
8. **Carl Leopold Fredrik** of Baden (1790-1852)
9. **Fredrik I Wilhelm August** of Baden (1826-1907)
10. **Sophia Maria Victoria** of Baden (1862-1930)
11. **Gustav VI Adolf** (1882-1978)
12. **Gustav Adolf** (1906-1947)
13. **Carl XVI Gustaf** (1946- )

**Erik Johansson Vasa**, died 8 Nov. 1520

Daughter:

**Margareta Eriksdotter** ( -1536)

1. **Pehr Brahe** (1520-1590)
2. **Erik Brahe** (1552-1614)
3. **Gustaf (Brahe) Örnevinge** (1598-1666)
4. **Anna Örnevinge**, m. Lagerberg ( -1672)
5. **Håkan Lagerberg** (1661-1708)
6. **Pehr Lagerberg** (1707-1777)
7. **Sven Otto Lagerberg** (1747-1792)
8. **Gustava Charlotta Lagerberg**, m. Schuer (1787-1876)
9. **Carl Fredrik Schuer** (1813-1898)
10. **Anna Charlotta Schuer**, m. Larsson (1840-1928)
11. **Albin Verner Gustafsson** (1865-1944)
12. **Charles Verner Gustafson** (1905-1988)
13. **Robert Warner Gustafson** (1930- )

## Sources

Parish records of the following parishes in Skaraborg *län* - Acklinga, Korsberga, Kyrkefalla, Locketorp, Sjögerstad, Skövde and Våmb.

Schuer family history (manuscript).

Emigration lists for Göteborg.

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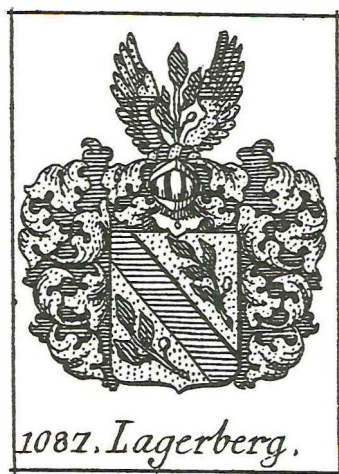
Axel Lindersköld, *Genealogiska tabeller över Europas furstehus*.

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Coat of arms of the Lagerberg family.

Illustration from Pehr Carlskiöld's

*Svea rikes ridderskaps och adels  
wapn-bok* (Stockholm 1781).